

Help Paying for Prescriptions in 2006



Senior Health Insurance
Information Program

Ask SHIIP

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Regional Program Manager

Q: My neighbor got a letter from Social Security telling her about help paying for her prescriptions in 2006. Why did I not get one?

A: Over the course of the summer, Social Security will be sending millions of people with Medicare letters and an Application for Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs (Form SSA-1020). These letters explain that if your income is below \$14,355 (\$19,245 couple) you may not have to pay the monthly premiums or deductibles associated with the new Medicare Prescription Drug Plans. Your prescription co-pays could be as little as \$2.

Your resources must also be below \$10,000 (\$20,000 couple). These resource limits can be slightly higher (an additional \$1,500 per person) if you plan to use some of your money for burial expenses. Resources include such things as bank accounts, stocks and

bonds. Your house, car and personal possessions are not counted as resources.

Even if your annual income is higher, you still may be able to get help. Some examples include if you are supporting other family members who live with you, or if you have earnings from a job.

If you receive an application, you should complete and return it as soon as possible. Letters are not being sent out by zip code, so yours may still be on its way. You can request an application by calling Social Security at **1-800-772-1213** or by calling **1-800-MEDICARE**. You can also call SHIIP at **1-800-452-4800** and request the Finding Help with Prescriptions packet, or find out how to set up an in person consultation with a volunteer in your area.

You can also visit your local Social Security office or visit their web site at www.socialsecurity.gov.

Starting July 1, 2005 you will be able to fill out the application on-line at www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp.

After you apply, Social Security will review your application and send you a letter to let you know if you qualify. Then you must enroll in a Medicare Prescription

Drug Plan to receive the extra help. It is in your interest to choose the plan that covers your prescriptions and best meets your needs. You can select a plan between November 15, 2005, and May 15, 2006, but the earlier you enroll in a plan, the sooner you can begin to save money. If you do not sign up for a plan by May 15, 2006, you will be assigned to a plan by Medicare.

If you have Medicare and receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments, or have Medicare and Medicaid, or the state of Indiana pays your Medicare premiums for you, you will be automatically signed up for help in paying the costs of the Prescription Drug Plans. You are eligible for the assistance and will not be required to do any paperwork.

Note: The Prescription Drug Plans, which start in January 2006, are for everyone enrolled in or eligible for Medicare Part A or B regardless of income. Sign up for these plans is voluntary, although delaying enrollment could lead to higher premiums if you do not have other prescription coverage that is as good as, or better than the Prescription Drug Plans.

Source: www.socialsecurity.gov

Address your questions to:

Ask SHIIP
311 W. Washington St, Ste. 300
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Or www.in.gov/idoi/shiip
1-800-452-4800

Summer 2005: Letters go out regarding financial assistance

SHIIP is a free, unbiased counseling program provided by the Indiana State Department of Insurance. For assistance, call your local SHIIP site to make an appointment or call the state office at 1-800-452-4800 to obtain a list of local SHIIP sites.